



March 19, 2023

Chair Moller and members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

The Minnesota Justice Research Center (MNJRC) writes in regards to HF 46, introduced by Representative Sandra Feist, to establish a state Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice.

The Minnesota Justice Research Center is collaborating with the University of Minnesota's Healthy Youth Development - Prevention Research Center to examine restorative justice practices. We've found that when done effectively, restorative justice provides valuable opportunities for young people to take responsibility for their misdeeds while circumventing the high recidivism rates of the traditional criminal legal system and the severe drawbacks of youth incarceration.

Restorative programs have sprouted across the country because the criminal legal system has not adequately addressed the needs of young people arrested for offenses, victims, or the broader community. Restorative justice, in contrast, is not only an advantageous response to crime, it is a proven path to prevent future offenses. A Department of Justice literature review concluded that "youths who participate in restorative justice programs are less likely to reoffend, compared with youths who are processed traditionally in the juvenile justice system" (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Restorative Justice for Juveniles Literature Review*, 2021)

However, concerns have risen over the implementation, effectiveness, and reach of restorative justice programs. As the *Star Tribune* reported last year, "Minnesota has no

TRANSFORMING OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM  
Minnesota Justice Research Center  
2355 Fairview Ave. #262; Roseville, MN 55113  
WWW.MNJRC.ORG



uniform standards for who can participate in restorative justice programs, no guidelines about what the programs should include, and little insight into whether they are working because outcomes like recidivism are not consistently tracked.” HF 46 seeks to address these concerns by ensuring that every county is served by a sustainable, accountable, restorative justice program.

To strengthen restorative justice statewide, the Minnesota Justice Research Center makes three recommendations:

1. The Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice is funded and supported as a core aspect of our responses to crime rather than a supplemental program for a select few youths that have committed offenses.
2. The Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice has a mandate and requisite funding for robust evaluations to ensure that results are being tracked and publicly disseminated. Communities where restorative justice has been successfully implemented can provide leadership in establishing standards of practice and guidance. This transparency and accountability will boost public confidence in restorative justice.
3. The Office of Juvenile Restorative Justice provides support to local jurisdictions to apply standards of practice while at the same time allowing for local innovation and flexibility due to geography and demographics.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Terrell".

Justin Terrell  
Executive Director  
The Minnesota Justice Research Center

TRANSFORMING OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM  
Minnesota Justice Research Center  
2355 Fairview Ave. #262; Roseville, MN 55113  
WWW.MNJRC.ORG



[justin@mnjrc.org](mailto:justin@mnjrc.org)  
612-432-2141

TRANSFORMING OUR JUSTICE SYSTEM  
Minnesota Justice Research Center  
2355 Fairview Ave. #262; Roseville, MN 55113  
WWW.MNJRC.ORG